

## **FACE COVERINGS**

The South Hadley Public Schools is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation. All face coverings must comply with the dress code provisions of the student handbook.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- is having trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- is incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers may provide an alternative in some instances but **are not to be used in lieu of face coverings**. Bandanas, gators/gator masks, and scarves do not provide adequate protection, and may not be used in lieu of 2 loop ear masks, or surgical style masks.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one.

Principles of Restorative Practice will be implemented if students are in violation of this policy. The following protocol will be utilized:

1. teacher gives verbal redirection in class and reminds student why policy is in place;
2. teacher conferences with student in hallway and reviews the expectation and how refusal to comply can impact others' health;
3. counselor conferences with student and reiterates the above information;
4. principal/ designee conferences with student;
5. principal/ designee consults with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

#### LEGAL REFERENCES:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Considerations for Wearing Masks -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Reopening Guidelines

- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Mask Up MA! -

<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC - August 2020

1<sup>ST</sup> reading: August 31, 2020

2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading & adopted: September 14, 2020

## **Protocols Guiding Face Coverings, Recess and Physical Education**

❖ Students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after recess as well as when using high-touch equipment. Increase supervision to limit high-risk behaviors. Supervision could be increased to ensure safe practices are followed, particularly during high-risk times (start/end of recess) and in high-risk locations (enclosed or small, hard-to-see places on fixed equipment, or anywhere with high child density). Supervisors should maintain physical distance from students and continue to wear masks. Ideally, recess times could be staggered so that children in different classes or cohorts would not interact (to maintain group distancing).

❖ If classes or cohorts must share the same recess time, entry and exit times could be staggered, or different entry and exit locations could be used for each group. If the schoolyard is large and diverse enough to provide adequate space and variety to each class (including access to all types of schoolyard locations and equipment), classes or cohorts could be provided with designated spaces on the schoolyard in which to play (if recess times cannot be staggered). These designated spaces could be rotated frequently (e.g., daily, weekly, depending on the variety available) to provide children access to a variety of schoolyard experiences. Schools can allow use of shared portable equipment (e.g., balls, wheeled toys) as play with portable equipment promotes physical activity and allows children to practice motor and social skills. Shared equipment can be disinfected between each class/cohort, and students should wash hands after using shared equipment. Schools may also allow children to “sign out” pieces of equipment and clean each piece between uses.

➤ When possible, schools could consider how to modify games/activities to promote safe play. For example, the game “tag” could be replaced with “shadow tag,” in which children step on each other’s shadows instead of touching each other directly.

➤ Gym equipment should be cleaned after every use with EPA-approved disinfectant.

## **During physical education activities: Guidance for Courses Requiring Additional Safety**

### **Considerations for Fall 2020**

- If outdoors, without masks, these activities can occur with 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.
- Courses and Educational Activities that involve regular sharing of equipment
- Many courses and activities use equipment and materials that are regularly shared between students, including music, visual arts, and physical education. The sharing of equipment and materials (e.g., building blocks, computers) is permitted with the following modifications.
  
- ❖ Require students to wash hands, wear masks, and maintain distance
  - Students should wash or sanitize hands before and after using equipment; frequent handwashing is likely the best way to protect against transmission from surfaces.
  - Ideally, students must be 6 feet apart. When wearing masks, 3 feet is the minimum distance allowed between students (seat edge to seat edge). Masks must cover the nose and mouth and be on at all times if students are less than 6 feet apart or using shared equipment.

❖ Minimize and modify shared equipment usage

➤ Consider lesson plans that minimize the use of shared equipment.

If feasible, reduce

class sizes for classes requiring equipment to reduce the need for equipment sharing.

➤ If feasible, procure additional pieces of equipment in order to limit sharing. This may not be possible for more expensive equipment (e.g., cameras) but may be possible for other types (e.g., some art supplies).

➤ Assign specific students to specific pieces of equipment or workstations (e.g., computers, art stations) that they can use for each class session. This is similar to having assigned seats in classrooms so that specific students are always near the same other students.

➤ If there is not enough equipment for each student to have their own, consider creating cohorts, e.g., having students work in pairs or small groups and keeping those groups the same.

■ One student can physically touch the equipment (e.g., camera) and the other students can play roles that do not involve physically touching the equipment (e.g., arranging items to be photographed).

■ If it is possible for the students to wipe down/clean the equipment part of the way through class, students can switch roles. Otherwise, students can swap roles in the next class session.

➤ Equipment that touches the eyes or mouth (e.g., cameras) can be shared if a disposable protective cover is added and students do not directly breathe into the

item (for example, woodwind instruments cannot be shared). Disposable protective covers should be removed, disposed of and replaced with a new cover between uses, and the equipment should be cleaned between uses by students or custodial staff.

➤ Instruments that do not come into contact with the mouth (e.g., piano) can be shared if cleaned by students or custodial staff between uses. Woodwind or brass instruments (e.g., flute, saxophone, trumpet, clarinet) cannot be shared.

➤ Do not share equipment or objects that are hard to clean and disinfect (e.g., any materials with fabric or irregular surfaces such as stuffed animals or playdough)

Increase shared equipment cleaning

➤ Shared equipment should be wiped down before and after each use (so there are ideally two wipe-downs between each student's use). Students or custodial staff could wipe down/clean equipment as appropriate.

■ An EPA approved disinfectant should be made available in each room for this purpose. Sufficient inventory of disinfectant supplies should be maintained at all times.

■ Teachers play an important role in proper equipment hygiene. In the classes in which students wipe down/clean their own equipment, teachers should demonstrate how to properly wipe down/clean equipment, reinforce the importance of this practice, and supervise cleaning to ensure it is done correctly.

■ Post signage in all areas with shared equipment reminding students to wipe it down/clean it before and after use.

➤ Additionally, shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily as part of building cleaning schedules. Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., handles, buttons) should be cleaned multiple times a day.

- ❖ Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- ❖ Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, magazines, and other games or learning aids.
- ❖ Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection including storing products securely away from children
- ❖ Help increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors.
- ❖ Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- ❖ Close off and clean all areas with EPA-approved disinfectant in the areas of the suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases after they have left the area promptly. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products including storing products securely away